



Workforce Strategy 2020-2023

FUTURE TOWN,
FUTURE PEOPLE



Foreword by Portfolio Holder

The coming three years will bring some of the biggest challenges that the council has ever had to face. We are living in a time of profound change – both in terms of the local community we serve and how the council will operate.

Never before have our staff had a more important role to play in delivering the services our residents need. We're seeing greater demands than ever before for many of our services, with already disadvantaged families and individuals in Stevenage struggling ever harder against the global impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Building upon the strong foundations we have laid down in our preceding People Strategy, and responding to the change around us, we need to continue to adapt and develop – both individually and organisationally. The sum of our parts is more powerful than our individual expertise – it is our collective efforts and collaboration that will enable us to deliver.

We must draw on and develop the expertise of our people, be open to new innovations and learning, and lead the way. Critically, we must stay true to our values and create a co-operative and collaborative workplace culture.

During the development of this strategy, informed by many of you, five key strategic themes have been identified. These themes will pave our approach, reaffirming our commitment to value, support and develop our people,

This strategy sets out a three year approach (2020-2023), however, it will need ongoing adaptation and development to respond to the changing world we live in.

The actions we have set will set us up as a great place to work. Supported and equipped, and working collaboratively with partners and others to deliver positive improvements for residents and the community.



Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd
Executive Portfolio Holder (Resources)



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The Workforce Strategy

The Workforce Strategy 2020 is a critical enabler for delivering the council's strategic ambitions over the next three years. It is through our people that we will deliver the nine corporate priorities identified in the Future Town, Future Council plan.

We are facing unprecedented levels of change globally and locally, both for ways of working and how we serve our community. This is an important time for us to lay out a clear plan for developing and supporting our dedicated and successful workforce.

This Workforce Strategy identifies actions that will improve employees' experiences and position us as an "Employer of Choice". It is a working strategy with enough flexibility built in to allow us to adapt as new priorities emerge and/or the needs of our community change. We will regularly review and change the actions within the strategy according to the challenges and opportunities we face.

This strategy is for everyone across the council. It reminds us that although we have a wide range of roles, and deliver a very diverse range of services to our residents and community, we are all committed to creating a great place to work.

The Workforce Strategy has identified five key strategic themes that underpin the strategy:

1. New Ways of Working

We will develop and embed a model of work being a thing we do, rather than a place we go. We will utilise technology to enable work to be delivered in the most appropriate location for the task, be that working from home, an office, or in the community. This will enable greater flexibility and thus support work-life balance opportunities and set out a new deal for our people. We will aspire for the office environment to be a place that brings our people together, to enable collaboration, innovation and developing that shared sense of purpose.

2. Attracting and retaining the best people

We will develop an employer brand that resonates with our core values, aims, and ways of working, giving current and prospective employees a realistic insight into our workforce deal. We will continue to attract the most capable people to build an exceptional, diverse and culturally safe workplace. Our employee experience will be aligned to our values, vision and future organisational needs.

3. Engagement and Communication

We will work to refocus what internal communication means to the Council ensuring our cascades use a range of channels and foster genuine dialogue. Effective internal communication is central to developing trust, engagement and productivity across the workforce.

4. Inclusion and Wellbeing

We will be known for nurturing a progressive, inclusive, safe and healthy working environment. We will have a culture that fosters organisational agility and flexibility, helping us to respond to the change swiftly and successfully.

5. Organisational Development

We will develop leaders who are empowering and equipped to lead and engage the workforce in the future ways of working. Developing a culture of personal accountability and pride in delivering innovative and excellent customer service to our residents.

People vision

Our vision is to:

Build an empowered and engaged workforce to deliver exceptional services to our residents and community

- growing and developing future leaders
- enabling our people to live the councils values and convey the councils purpose and ambitions to the community we serve
- building flexibility and adaptability to respond to the changing world.

Strategic Context

We have taken the opportunity to “pause” and reflect on our experience in the initial response to the global Coronavirus pandemic. We felt it was important that our first priority was to ensure the health and safety of our workforce and we are proud of how quickly our staff adapted to new ways of working. We recognise that the world of work is likely to change for everyone following the pandemic experience and we want to learn lessons from this experience of what worked well and we would like to see continue in our future workforce strategy.

The council is committed to delivering significant transformation to meet our strategic ambitions. It is important for us to consider key strategic influences on the strategy. These are wide ranging but have inter-dependences, and with our staff being a key enabler, it is imperative that these are carefully considered in developing our Workforce Strategy.

Financial Outlook

The council's financial outlook remains challenging, both in terms of revenue and capital availability across both Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund accounts. The Council is expected to end the 2020/21 year in deficit, despite central government grants. Cost pressures and loss of income from COVID 19 are significantly impacting. There is a £1.5 million funding gap to be addressed over the three years due to the reducing government grants. We recognise that the only way to successfully address the financial challenge is through a combination of efficiencies, commercialisation and transformation.

Commercial Council

We will operate the council in more of a business like way by equipping staff with the right skills and engendering commercial behaviour to support our Financial Security goals.

Climate Change

We have a holistic vision which focuses on cutting our own emissions to net zero and supporting our businesses and residents to do the same by 2030. Our ways of working and workforce will embody this vision.

Connected to our Customers

We will have a workforce who is connected to our customers, interacting with them at the right time and in the most appropriate way, streamlining our processes and utilising digital tools to their full potential. Recognising that customer experience is a shared responsibility across the entire workforce, we will design, develop and deliver our services to enhance and enable customer experiences.

Public Sector Hub

As part of the town centre regeneration plans a new public sector hub is included in phase three. We know that the new hub will bring with it new ways of working, so this needs to be considered for designing our future ways of working.

Devolution

We know there is going to be a government White Paper on Devolution in September 2020, but at this stage we do not know the detail of this. We are working collaboratively with other district councils and wider networks to keep in touch and prepare for this, because this is an important consideration.

Background to the Workforce Strategy 2020

The Council has a clear direction set out in our Future Town, Future Council programme, an ambitious once in generation plan to invest in the town and the council.

The People Strategy 2014-2017 set the foundations for our workforces and the Senior Management Review in 2016 and subsequent Business Unit Reviews that have followed have prepared us well in terms of structure. The focus must now turn to enabling delivery and new ways of working.

To deliver on our ambitions, we must have the right skills and enablers in place, and stay true to our values by creating a cooperative and collaborative work culture based on respect and integrity.

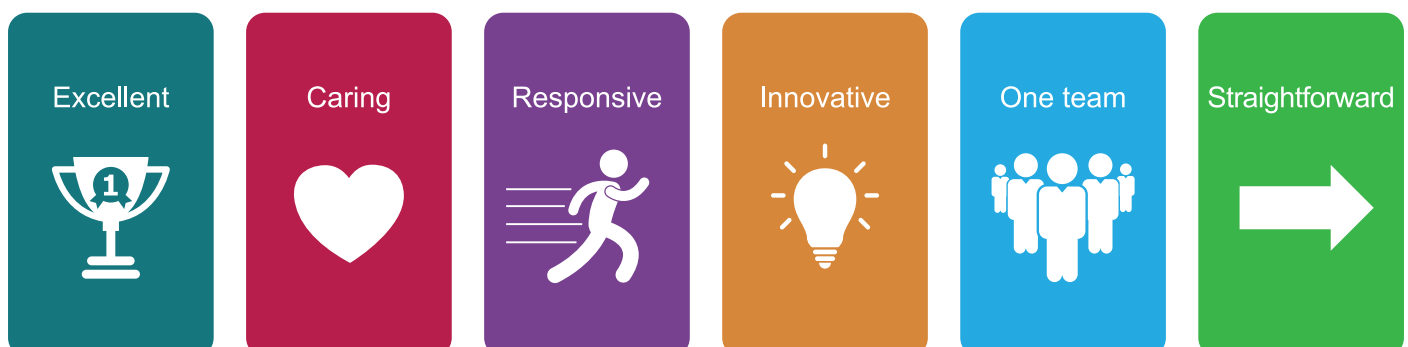
The Workforce Strategy outlines our approach, over the next three years, to creating and maintaining the conditions that will enable us to deliver on our ambitions for the community, whilst also continuing to deliver excellent services to residents in a rapidly changing environment and also providing a stimulating and satisfying work experience and opportunities.

Consultation

We have developed this strategy through consultation with key stakeholders, from different areas of the council and trade union representatives. Consultation activities included surveys, virtual focus groups and interviews during which issues were identified and potential solutions developed.

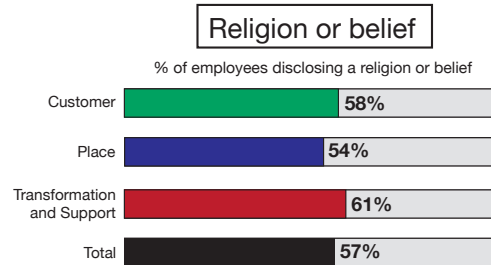
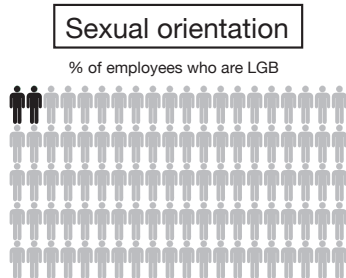
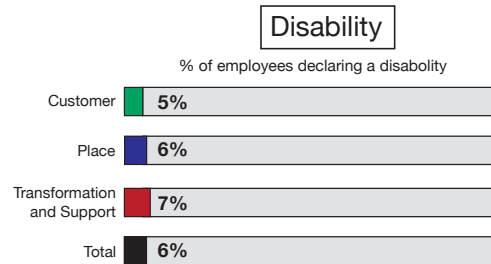
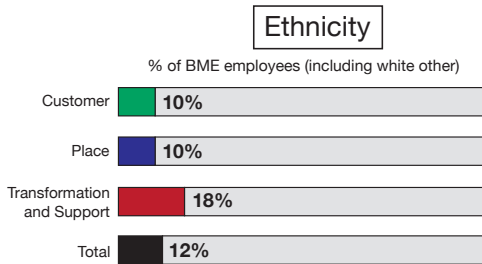
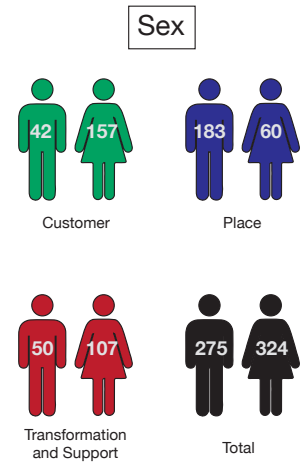
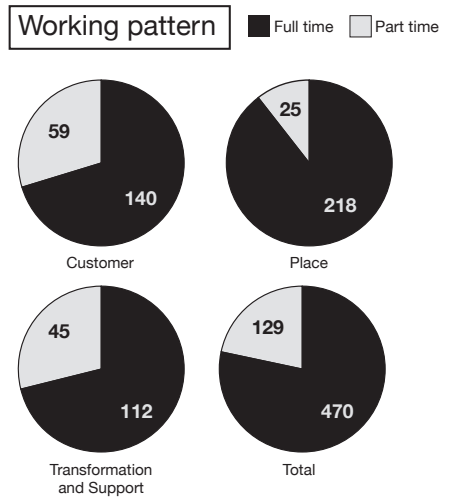
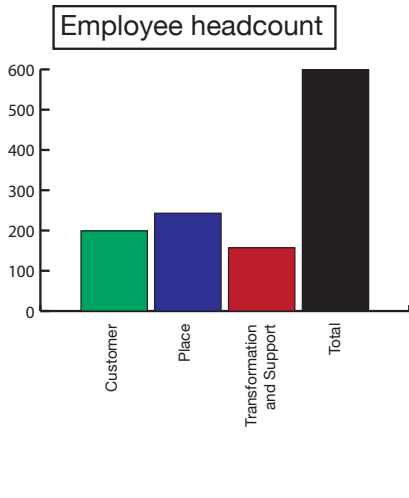
We also recognise the importance of continuing to engage with key stakeholders as other programmes of work develop to ensure any inter-dependencies are identified and aligned, for example commercial, IT and digital strategies and the regeneration proposals relating the future Public Sector Hub.

Values

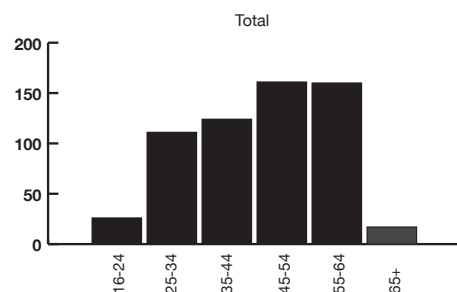
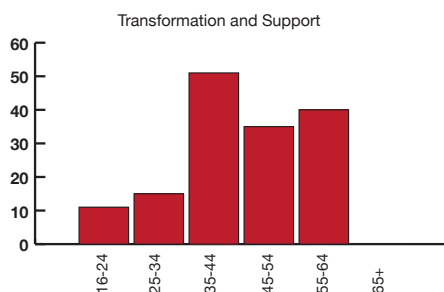
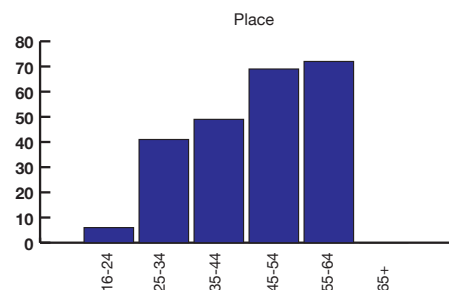
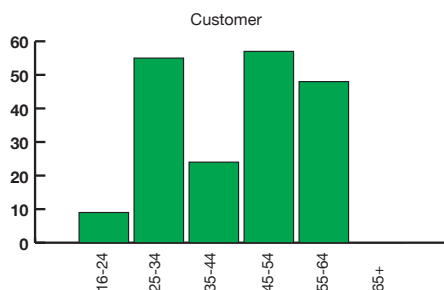


Workforce Profile

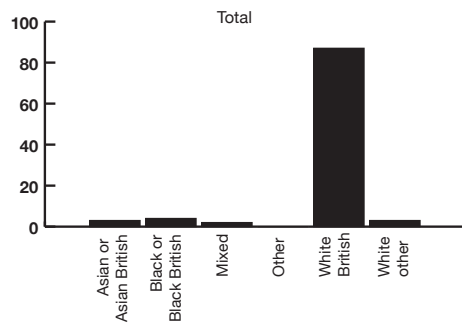
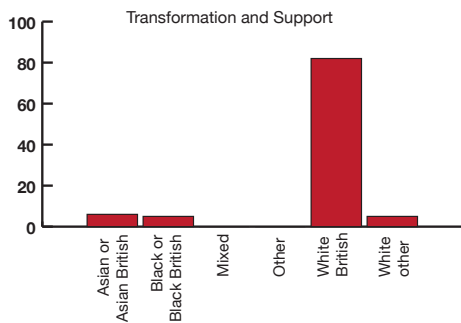
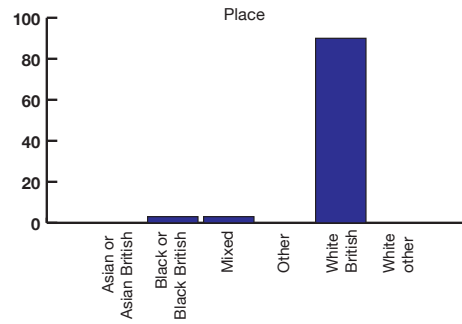
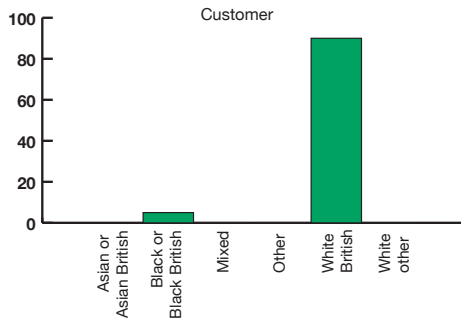
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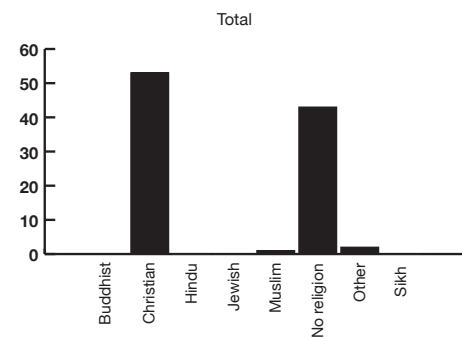
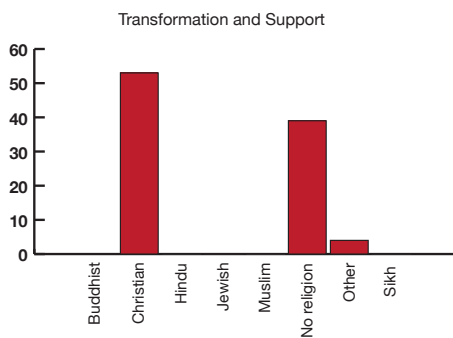
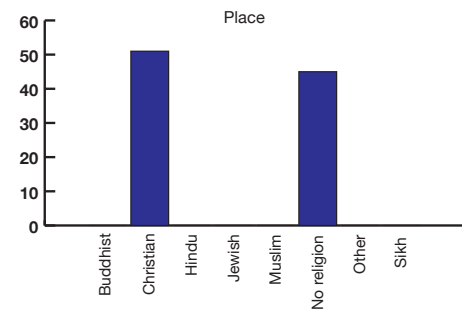
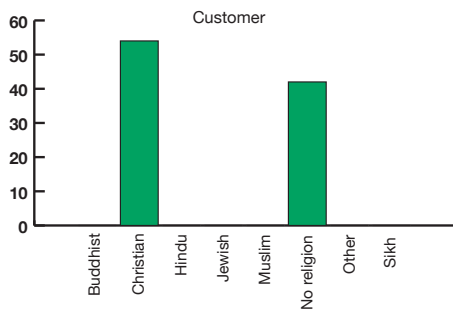
Age



Ethnicity %



Religion %

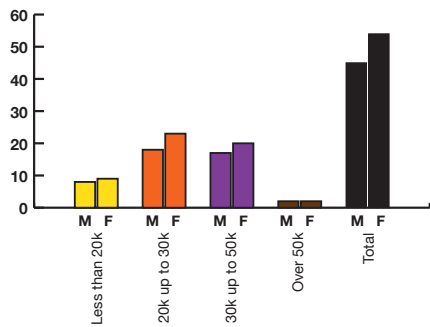


Base Pay - Head Count

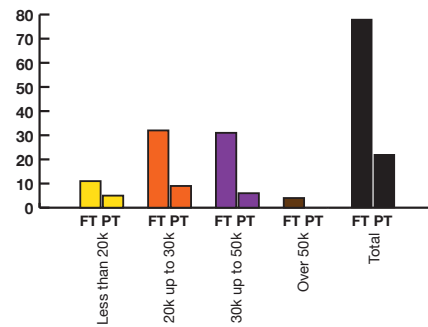
Key:
 Less than 20k 20k up to 30k
 30k up to 50k Over 50k



Sex %

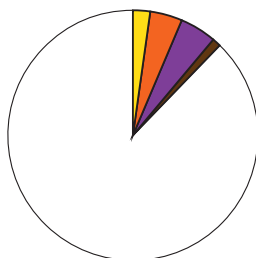


Working pattern %



Ethnicity

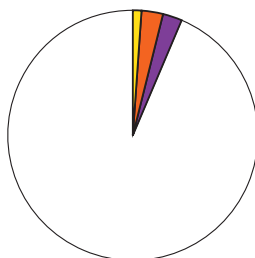
% of BME employees (including white other)



Less than 20k **2.38%**
 20k up to 30k **4.07%**
 30k up to 50k **4.75%**
 Over 50k **1.19%**

Disability

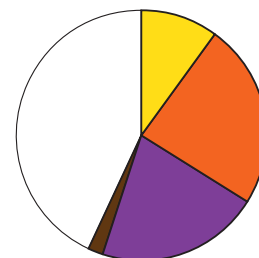
% of employees declaring disability



Less than 20k **1.37%**
 20k up to 30k **2.74%**
 30k up to 50k **2.39%**
 Over 50k **0%**

Religion or belief

% of employees disclosing a religion or belief



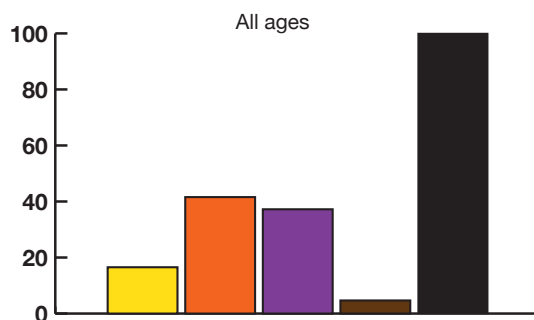
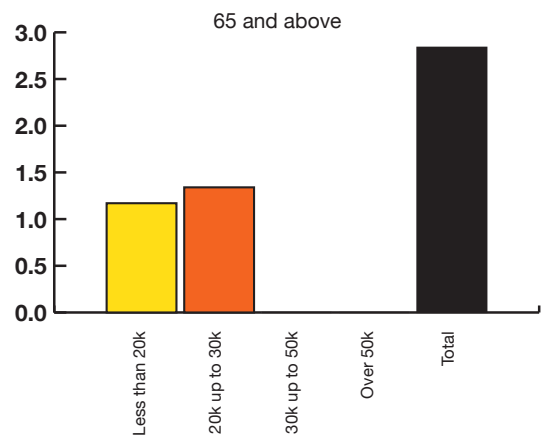
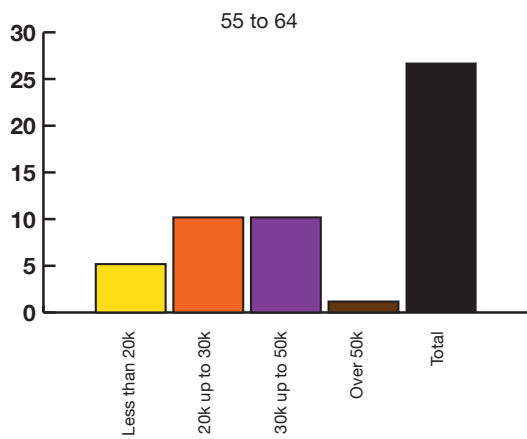
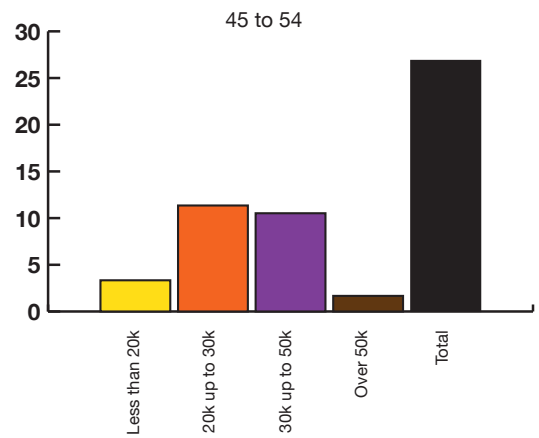
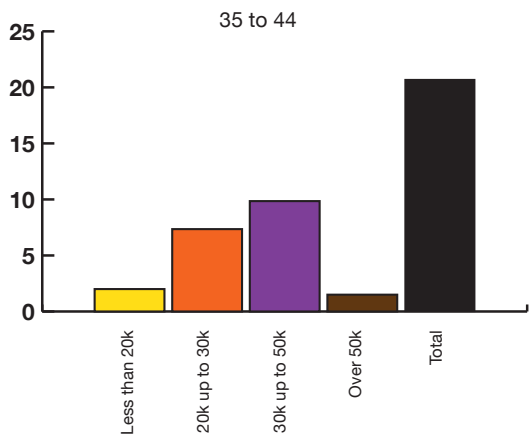
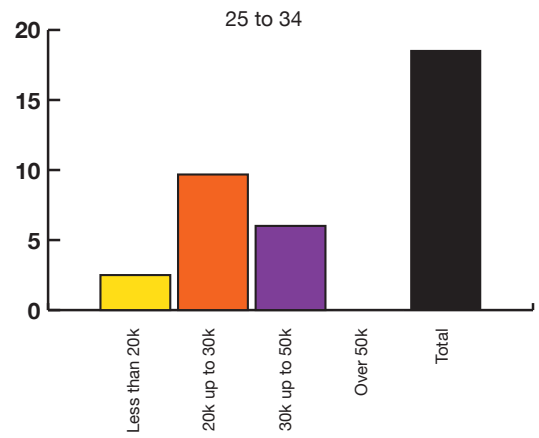
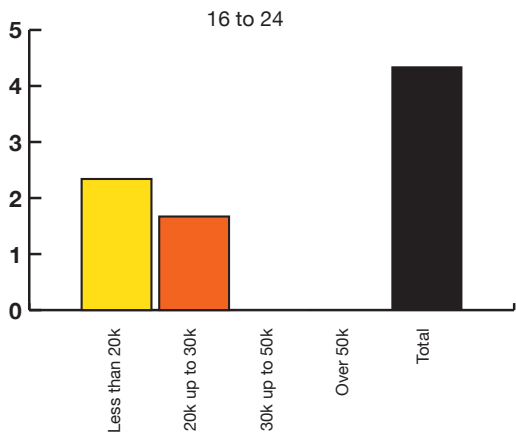
Less than 20k **9.76%**
 20k up to 30k **24.58%**
 30k up to 50k **20.83%**
 Over 50k **2.06%**

Sexual orientation

% of employees who are LGB



Age %



Our five core themes of the strategy

1. New Ways of Working

Outcome: We will develop and embed a model of work being a thing we do, rather than a place we go. We will utilise technology to enable work to be delivered in the most appropriate location for the task, be that working from home, an office, or in the community. This will enable greater flexibility which will support work-life balance opportunities and set out a new deal for our people. We will aspire for the office environment to be a place that brings our people together, to enable collaboration, innovation and developing that shared sense of purpose.

Changes in workforce profile mean that we need to redefine our workforce deal. Employees have expectation of provision from the Council. Within the Way of Working Survey (2020), 32% of staff said

a home office set up including equipment would help improve their current working arrangements and a further 24% noted that improved IT systems would also help. Likewise, remote and flexible working can provide many intangible benefits for our workforce and work needs to be undertaken to shape what our employee deal looks like in line with our aspirations.

Similar to the changes in where we work, expectations within the employment market are also changing about how and when people work.

We need to define our job roles and ways of working to support flexibility in service delivery and work life balance for our employees. We need to become more effective at managing by outcomes rather than presenteeism.



Place of Work

Ever more work is becoming something that we do, as opposed to being about the place that we go. Our future workforce needs to be based in the most appropriate workplace for them to do what they need to do to meet our customer’s needs.

Cooperative Neighbourhood Management

Working as neighbourhood teams, will help us work differently to deliver services more efficiently for our residents, with shared responsibility for how we resolve local issues.

Challenging existing practices and processes

Reflecting on our experience from the Covid 19 response, and taking account of the Ways of Working survey (2020) and business continuity information, have identified a list of process changes that will help modernise and future proof our ways of working across the Council.

Utilisation of technology

Our technology needs to enable a workplace that it mobile, and accessible. It also needs to support communication and collaboration, remotely and in person.

Looking forward, to ensure that we have the right person in the right place at the right time we are likely to have 3 distinct groups of staff:

STAFF GROUP	PROFILE
Community Based	<p>These roles will work primarily in the community with access to remote sites as required for their role such as Neighbourhood Warden, Repairs Operative, Refuse Loader and Housing Officer.</p> <p>A typical day for this person might entail checking emails at home in the morning first thing, attending a resident meeting in a community centre in the morning followed by ward visits in the afternoon, finishing with a team video call.</p>
Remote Working	<p>Primarily working remotely, accessing SBC sites as and when required, examples include Accountant, Human Resources Business Partners, and Administrative Officer.</p> <p>A typical day for these will involve working at home, using technology and digital tools to support the delivery of their services.</p> <p>Visiting the office for tasks involving collaboration, innovation on a shared sense of purpose</p>
Site Based	<p>A very small number of roles will be required to be based primarily at one site for the majority of their time for example Facilities Officer, or Independent Living Officer.</p> <p>A typical day will involve going to one site to deliver something that needs to be physically done from that place for example delivering specialist support to a resident in the independent living scheme.</p>

2. Attracting and retaining the best people

Outcome: We will develop an employer brand that resonates with our core values, aims, and ways of working, giving current and prospective employees a realistic insight into our workforce deal. We will continue to attract the most capable people to build an exceptional, diverse and culturally safe workplace. Our employee experience will be aligned to our values, vision and future organisational needs.

Linking our employer brand to the wider element of the Future Town Future Council programme will aid us to market Stevenage to potential recruits as a town where employees can live, work and enjoy.

The average salary of those working at Stevenage Borough Council is higher than the average salary of those living within the town, our brand narrative needs to develop to support our community wealth building ambitions, creating opportunities for and being attractive to local people.

3. Engagement and Communication

Outcome: We will work to refocus what internal communication means to the Council ensuring our cascades use a range of channels and foster genuine dialogue. Effective internal communication is central to developing trust, engagement and productivity across the workforce.

We need to continue to develop our cooperative and collaborative culture in the workplace. Stronger connectivity and collaboration will be important as we face change in the workplace and the world around us. We need to ensure we engage with, listen to and communicate with everyone.

We need to communicate more effectively to drive a transparent and responsive work environment. To enable this, we will need to embrace technology and other innovative communication channels and ways of working. We also need to ensure we adopt such approaches with partners and customers.

We also need to ensure we have a responsive, flexible and fair approach to reward and recognition, ensuring we can promptly recognise and value excellent performance, achievement and contributions.

We need to support our managers and leaders to communicate effectively with our workforce both face to face and remotely.

4. Inclusion and Wellbeing

Outcome: We will be known for nurturing a progressive, inclusive, safe and healthy working environment. We will have a culture that fosters organisational agility and flexibility, helping us to respond to the change swiftly and successfully.

We all have a role to play in supporting and promoting employee wellbeing. We will embrace a culture which has safety as paramount importance and giving priority to mental health and creating a happy and resilient workforce. We will continue to respond robustly to any allegations of bullying or inappropriate behaviour.

We aspire for your values to support us in establishing cultures of inclusivity and a truly diverse workforce. There is work to do to aspire to be an Employer of Choice in this respect and have a workforce that reflects the diverse community that we serve.

5. Organisational Development

Outcome: We will develop leaders who are empowering and equipped to lead and engage the workforce in the future ways of working. Developing a culture of personal accountability and pride in delivering innovative and excellent customer service to our residents.

Our leadership model needs to be able to support and enable a remote and community based workforce, with a focus on productivity, management of outcomes and quality interactions.

Employees will take accountability for their own personal development and we will support all our staff to achieve their desired learning outcomes, recognising the importance of on the job learning. We recognise we have considerable knowledge and technical expertise and greater emphasis will be placed on developing the behaviours set out in our competency framework in supporting us in “how” we deliver our services.

We will provide opportunities to work across teams and functions. These experiences will broaden our capabilities and knowledge, offer creative and fulfilling career opportunities help us connect better across the workplace and breakdown silo working.

We will also recognise the value in growing our own talent with apprentice and graduate opportunities and having a talent pipeline, particularly for hard to recruit posts.

Reporting and Governance

The Workforce Strategy is underpinned by a detailed action plan which sets out steps to be taken to achieve the desired outcomes, along with timescales, owners and measures of success, which will be monitored and reported on throughout the three year period of the strategy.

We will establish a People Board to review and monitor progress and also ensure this strategy is owned by the whole organisation and not just seen as a Human Resources strategy, with representatives from across all business units and other key stakeholders such as trade unions.

The People Board will:

- Monitor progress against the actions detailed in the action plan
- Review measures of success on a quarterly basis
- Propose annual actions and targets to be agreed by Portfolio Holder (Resources)

